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The Behavioristic Attitude ^{ct}

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**THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR
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GENERAL PURPOSES

The National Committee for Mental Hygiene and its affiliated state societies and committees are organized to work for the conservation of mental health; to help prevent nervous and mental disorders and mental defect; to help raise the standards of care and treatment for those suffering from any of these disorders or mental defect; to secure and disseminate reliable information on these subjects and also on mental factors involved in problems related to industry, education, delinquency, dependency, and the like; to aid ex-service men disabled in the war; to coöperate with federal, state, and local agencies and with officials and with public and private agencies whose work is in any way related to that of a society or committee for mental hygiene. Though methods vary, these organizations seek to accomplish their purposes by means of education, encouraging psychiatric social service, conducting surveys, promoting legislation, and through coöperation with the many agencies whose work touches at one point or another the field of mental hygiene.

When one considers the large groups of people who may be benefited by organized work in mental hygiene, the importance of the movement at once becomes apparent. Such work is not only for the mentally disordered and those suffering from mental defect, but for all those who, through mental causes, are unable so to adjust themselves to their environment as to live happy and efficient lives.

THE BEHAVIORISTIC ATTITUDE*

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I HAVE been asked to approach the problem of community work from the standpoint of behaviorism, as it is called, and to outline such of the fundamental assumptions of modern psychology as may be of practical service to the community worker, enabling such worker to function more intelligently. In order that I may do this, I must first outline what I conceive to be the behavioristic attitude.

Behaviorism looks upon what a man does in contrast to what he thinks and feels—that is, upon his conduct—as being the most important expression of his psychology. In other words, his actions are taken as the only authoritative expression of what he is. Thinking and feeling have significance only so far as they are preparatory for and lead to action. The man who thinks and feels, but does not translate his ideas and emotions into action, is hamstrung by doubt; he is unable to choose among the several possibilities presented to him; out of the mass of possible actions he has not been able to choose one, and so his true self does not stand revealed. His powers of expression are “sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.” Behaviorism believes that “by their deeds ye shall know them.” However, I would remind you, in passing, that failure to act in the ordinary sense is itself action. A body comes to rest only because the forces that act upon it are for the time being in equilibrium.

It is from this behavioristic standpoint that I have been asked to speak to you and to outline the general approach and fundamental assumptions of psychology—from the point of view, in other words, of man in action, or, as I should prefer to say, of man as a complex of action systems. In order that you may get my point of view, I will devote a few words to a historical retrospect of the factors that led up to the behavioristic movement in psychology.

The behavioristic psychology was one of those forward-looking efforts which were calculated to get beyond the concepts of the old academic, metaphysical type of psychology of a generation ago, and it was not satisfied by the physiological approach to its problems introduced by the Wundtian school. It was dominated by the need

*Lecture given in the training course for community workers, Columbia University, New York, September 30, 1920.

to get away from the necessity of dealing with involved introspections, which so frequently quickly gained a metaphysical ground, for it saw psychology as one of the biological sciences, not confined by any means to *homo sapiens*. The biological point of view necessarily involved the study of psyches other than human and made, therefore, the objective approach a necessity. In the study of animal psychology, the subject could not be interrogated in the usual way, but could be studied only in action, and thus there grew up that observational method which later came to be applied to man. This behavioristic attitude has distinct advantages and has been a useful variant in the course of psychological progress; it was a distinctly warranted new method because the old academic psychology had become sterile when it came to having anything helpful to offer in the solution of man's vital problems of living. It had nothing to say when it came to face his actual, practical problems, nothing to offer that was helpful in solving his difficulties or even in explaining their nature. It had come to be essentially a laboratory discipline occupied largely with questions of neuro-physiology and the physiology of the special sense organs.

The outstanding fact—the fact that the behavioristic viewpoint threw into high relief—is the fact that organisms are constructed on a pattern which has action for its purpose. Life itself has been defined as consisting of that constant back-and-forth flow of energy which constitutes the relation of the organism to its environment. Every change in the environment must be met by an adjustment on the part of the organism, and that adjustment involves action, or, expressed in physiological terms, reaction. The adjustment effected brings the organism into functional contact with the environment at more points than before and therefore necessitates further reactions of adjustment, the growing number and complexity of which constitute development in the individual and evolution in the race.

This fact alone justifies the emphasis of the behaviorists on conduct, and what you as community workers will have to deal with in essence will be the failures of individuals to meet the conditions imposed upon them by their environment, largely their social environment—to effect adequate reactions of adjustment. You will see the results of actions that were calculated to make such adjustments, but have, for one reason or another, failed more or less completely. The criminal, for instance, is one who, in order to meet certain requirements of his nature and at the same time retain a certain social standard, acts in a way that is more or less out of harmony with social standards and to that extent fails to effect an efficient adjust-

ment. His social standards, to be sure, are not those of the law-abiding citizen, but they spring from the same motives. He needs to provide for himself and family, so he steals; he is proud or rather vain, so he wears loud clothes; he likes to be looked up to by his associates, so he affects bravado and strives for skill in his particular line of work.

The great change that has come over psychology in recent days is that it has been humanized. In the days when psychology was metaphysical and academic, it was a subject for meditation in one's study; it had, strangely, almost no touch with the living, pulsing problem of human life. It was more interested in discussions of the nature of the soul than in such questions as why men failed in life. Failure of any kind was hardly recognized as a biological problem of adjustment, and so its real psychological significance failed of appreciation. Now, however, the whole tendency has changed, and it is just such problems as the criminal, the insane, the defective, the vagabond, the prostitute, the neurotic, and all sorts of minor disabilities that interest it most, and these are the same problems that occupy the focus of your attention.

To come to the question of the Why of some of these failures and your relation to them, to revert to the fundamental behavioristic conception of man as a complex of action systems or action patterns, one of the very obvious reasons for failure lies in the fact that the machinery which a man has at his command—and by this I mean his bodily machinery, his vital organs in all their complexities and intricate inter-relations—is inadequate to the carrying out of a socially acceptable life plan. Bodily illness of one sort or another, chronic and disabling diseases of the vital organs—the heart, the lungs, the kidneys—make the demands of his environment beyond his powers of adjustment. An astonishingly large percentage of the unfit, the social outcasts, are seriously handicapped by bodily disease, while approximately 50 per cent, I think, of all classes are as seriously impaired by obvious or comparatively easily discoverable mental disease. What has a behavioristic psychology to say to this fact? In the first place, the two classes are not so widely separate as my statement would lead you to believe. The metaphysical distinction between mind and body, which still persists in many quarters, would lead to a definite separation. From the behavioristic point of view, which is concerned only with conduct, they would both appear as groups that failed to meet their problem of adjustment efficiently. The court of last resort, which passes upon all the issues of life, is the psyche, and the psyche has failed in both instances. Physical disease merely in-

roduces a specific form of problem to be met, and the individual has been mentally incapable of handling it. We all know instances of men who have become beggared because they have lost the use of an arm or their sight, but we all also know instances of men who have risen superior to such disabilities and succeeded despite them, while some of us may know of those who have even succeeded because such misfortune has come to them. We have passed out of that stage of evolution in which success was solely a matter of blood and brawn, strength to kill or fleetness to escape, and are living in a period in which the struggle for survival, for success, is a contest of wits, a matter of brains. Therefore we may look upon failures of adaptation as predominantly failures at the psychological level. Here you will see I have grouped all maladjustments, whether they be of apparently physical—that is, bodily—or of mental origin, as finally psychological. This may seem a rather extraordinary thing to do, but it is justified so long as we look upon action as the final expression of the organism. The psyche is not something that has been added to man somewhere in the course of his development from embryo to adult, nor yet is it something that has been added somewhere in the course of the biological evolution of the species. Every organism, no matter how simple, even though it be only unicellular, has a head end that is the first to push its way into the environment. This head end is the central office, if you will, the center which operates to control and direct all the activities of the organism as a whole, as a biological unity, and serves as the final station where all its several parts are integrated for those functions in which it, as a unity, must needs engage. It contains—or rather it consists of, is made up of, is—the final collected integration of the action systems of all its parts. The organism is, therefore, something more than a collection of organs; it is a collection of organs that are related in such a way that they may all, like the several parts of a complicated machine, be brought into the service of a common purpose, and the head end is the device from which emanates the directing force for such integrated activities.

Body and mind, therefore, are in no sense separate, one from the other, they occupy no different temporal relations in development, the one has neither preceded nor followed the other; they have grown up and evolved together as part and parcel of the same thing, the one consisting of the parts, the other of the integrated relation of the parts.

Behavior, conduct, then, is seen to be of necessity the final expression in action of the whole, and so to have the importance that the

behaviorists attach to it. Defects in the individual—whether they be of mental or of bodily origin, whether they depend upon mind in the first instance or are traceable and dependent upon some defect of an organ, such as blindness—ultimately find their expression in conduct.

This latter statement requires amplification. The failures with which you will have to do are all really failures that involve the individual in his social adjustment. They are not, despite the fact that they often appear to be, solely individual affairs; they are defects at the level of adjustment between the individual and his fellows, or at the psycho-social level. It is because this is so that the large class of unfit are social problems. A defective individual, for instance, because of his defect is unable to measure up to the standards of behavior that are set by society; he is poor, ill fed, lives in unsanitary and crowded conditions, is more liable to become the victim of disease, which disease, under such circumstances, is more apt to spread; he suffers because of his privation and may turn to alcohol or to crime for relief. In his struggles to effect an adjustment, he turns to all sorts of activities that are antisocial, and so in innumerable ways becomes in his community a focus for moral and physical disease, which not only threatens him with destruction, but is also a serious source of danger, as a result of his acts and example, to others. He is distinctly out of alignment with the tendencies that make for social progress and thus becomes a menace to the community in which he lives. The defective spread moral and physical contagion, and just as the science of hygiene had its inception in the effort to clean up the pest holes of the big cities and manufacturing centers because of their danger to the community, so mental hygiene has now come forward to eliminate or render harmless the menace of mental defect; and it is realized that much of the former evil is dependent upon the latter. Take, for example, the venereal-disease problem. This deals with a class of diseases that are peculiarly destructive and that are disseminated by the prostitute. Now we know that a large percentage of prostitutes are feeble-minded, and so we are beginning to appreciate that one of the most hopeful single approaches to the venereal-disease problem is by way of a more effective handling of the problem of feeble-mindedness in the community. You will notice how immediately, as soon as we begin to deal with a problem of mental deficiency, we find it showing its teeth at the social level, how soon behavior that is inadequate to effect social adjustments becomes a social menace.

The same thing is true of less manifest disorders at what is usually supposed to be the psychological level. Take, for example, the person who is more or less crippled in efficiency as the result of a neurosis or

mild psychosis. Such a person, living in affluent circumstances, may seem to do no harm, but as a member of a poor and struggling family, he soon becomes a serious burden that may easily spell the difference between comfortable circumstances and a continuous fight for the bare necessities. Even in the former case, a neurotic person in the household necessarily becomes a burden to some degree, and to that same degree detracts from the fullest usefulness of the others, who must spend time and energy in meeting the problems thus created. All this you see from the standpoint of behavior, conduct, as the final measure of effectiveness of the individual.

These illustrations of the relation of the individual to society suggest at once an analogy between society, as composed of individuals, and the description I have already given of the body as composed of organs. In fact, we are dealing here with a situation that is something more than just an analogy. Society would be a meaningless term if its component individuals were not related in some way, if each functioned independently. The organism could not long survive such a dislocation of its several part functions, and society would be in a state of anarchy if the direction and control of its institutions were destroyed.

Now society has always, heretofore, been primarily and, for that matter, solely interested in the conduct of its members, in their acts, and whenever it has found some one doing things that tends to its disadvantage, it has sought to put a stop to such acts with very little thought of the actor, the doer of the act. At one time, for example, and that not so very long ago, there were over two hundred offenses on the statutes in England punishable by death, and the statutes were not inoperative by any means.

This is the method of eliminating the source, and is the natural way to proceed at first when nothing is seen but the obvious connection between the destructive result and its immediate cause. It is as if you should consult a physician for a pain in your leg and he should at once relieve you of the offending member by amputation. That was the way society dealt with its criminals in those days. To steal anything of the value of two shillings was a capital offense. It is the way, too, in which surgery has dealt—and, I have no doubt, is still dealing—with many of its problems. It is the easiest way—for the surgeon. For example, innumerable ovaries were sacrificed in my college days because the patient had pain in the ovarian region. Now we know that the pain, in many instances at least, was psychological. The surgeon was trying to cut out a psychosis. When, however, the functions of the ovary came to be better known, it was realized

that the cure was often worse than the disease, and so the practice ceased. What would you think of a watch maker to whom you took a watch with a broken mainspring and whose remedy was to remove the spring?

The same thing, however, has happened here as elsewhere. With increased knowledge, there has come a realization that there are other ways to tackle the problem that are more rational and bid fair to attain better results. The tendency in dealing with the delinquent, defective, and delinquent classes to-day is a tendency toward a greater individualization, a tendency to become more intimately acquainted with each individual problem, to deal, in other words, with the actor rather than with the act.

You community workers are like the trouble man employed by large business concerns. When any trouble arises with a customer—failure to deliver goods ordered, failure of goods to come up to quality agreed upon, dispute over the items in a bill—the trouble man is sent for to effect an adjustment. It is the same in the machinery of society as it is in the machinery of business. Whenever the machine does not work well, whenever there is lost motion, hot bearings, or a broken part, some one is sent to repair and adjust it. Now, it is just about these inefficients that defects in the social machine come to view. They are the weak points in the mechanism, and so, when anything goes wrong, it is more apt to go wrong about them than anywhere else because they are less able than the other parts to bear the stresses and the loads of social demands. It is your job to see if some working compromise can be effected, some adjustment that will be socially acceptable at least, if nothing more.

Now as to the matter of effecting the necessary readjustments. Up to this point it is evident that the matter of adjustment is one of the mechanistics of the relation of the individual to his fellows, his community. But what kind of an individual is it that gets so out of touch with his community? A study of his conduct, his behavior, will indicate that he is, in some way, an undeveloped person—one who, in his conduct, manifests ways of adjustment that are, relatively speaking, infantile. The whole problem of the dependent, defective, and delinquent classes is, to my mind, most helpfully looked at from this point of view, as exhibiting undeveloped types of reaction, reactions whose inadequacy lies in the fact that they are relatively infantile. We have to deal, therefore, with a group of people who need to be helped to grow up. They do not need education in the ordinary sense of schooling, but they do need guidance and direction along the

pathway that leads to more adult standards of behavior. What are some of the assumptions with which we must approach this effort?

In the first place, it is a fair assumption that every one desires to do better than he is doing. He not only wants to be more successful, but he wants to stand higher in the esteem of his fellows, even though his fellows may not represent a high standard of social efficiency. We must assume this because the very structure of society is based upon this forward-reaching tendency—yes, even life itself is expressive of this striving. Secondly, it is necessary to study the situation as thoroughly as possible in order to be able to define wherein the defect consists. The real defect may not reside at all where it seems to. An ineffective person may present evidences of a profound neurasthenic state coupled with tremendous ambition and bright ideas, when in reality the key to the situation is disclosed in the fact that he is a drug habitué. Then finally it is necessary to study the individual himself, in order to discover the nature of the difficulties within him that make for his poor social adjustments.

It is at this point that I part company with the extreme behaviorists, who would discredit the internal evidence entirely. It is true that "actions speak louder than words," and that when an action does occur, it is itself the best evidence of what the actor at that moment is, but it is a long way from this statement to the ability to see in acts their true meanings. Theoretically, to be sure, one should be able to do this, and some day perhaps it will be possible, but in the meantime there can be no objection to finding out what the internal evidence has to offer. Truly this evidence is itself not necessarily any easier to read than the act, but it is so much in addition and is helpful to that extent and also because it furnishes corroboration or otherwise of the other evidence. It should not be lost sight of that a very important part of the internal evidence does not consist in introspection, but in the conditions of the internal organs disclosed by clinical methods of examination. The evidence derived from this course, no less than that from introspective sources, helps to an evaluation of the individual's equipment and to the disclosure of the nature of the disabilities under which he labors.

I have said that for the behaviorist what a person thinks and feels is of no significance and to society what a person thinks and feels matters not at all. It is only what one does that counts. A man may think all he likes of murdering his neighbor and he will never be arrested, but the moment he attempts it the authorities are after him. But psychologically, from the standpoint of the organism as a complex of action systems, thinking and feeling are but acts *in statu*

nascendi. Many acts never get beyond the thinking and feeling stage, are never translated into conduct, and in connection with every one that is there are certain other, counter assertions, of opposing tendency, which, while they do not gain frank expression, are at least able to modify to some extent those that do. This arrangement by which conduct is the result of choice between opposing tendencies, each of which with varying force tries to avail itself of the machinery of expression, is the plan upon which the organism is built up. The athlete's muscles, if all extended or all flexed, would be useless to him in making those rapid movements upon which his skill depends; the heart, if it were not nicely balanced between an accelerating and an inhibiting mechanism, would be quite unequal to those quick responses, to the demands made upon it upon which life itself at times depends. It is the same with psychological tendencies. Progress is never unimpeded, obstacles always bestrew the path, difficulties must ever be overcome. It is true that the end product, conduct, bespeaks the man, but it is essential, when conduct is inefficient, to know something of the internal obstacles that interfere.

I have said that with every act there is some other, counter assertion that is attempting to appropriate the means of expression. In this highly figurative way I have put the case for what the psychoanalyst calls the wish. All of these tendencies within the psyche which are struggling for expression are wishes in the sense of this school, and it is only by knowing what they are and their relative strength that a dynamic plat, so to speak, can be made of the personality. The wish to conform, to be well thought of by one's fellows, is practically always dominant, but behind each such wish there is another, antisocial, infantile in tendency, that also seeks expression. The first is almost sure to succeed, but the degree of its success is measured by the strength of the second. The soldier who was afraid to go forward was also afraid not to because of the discredit his failure would bring in the opinion of his associates. For the same reason he was afraid to run away. The dread of loss of social esteem was often sufficient to over-balance a fear that was not strong enough to be controlling, and he went forward. But for some the fear of going forward was so great that it was impossible to do so. Equally, death faced them in the form of a firing squad if they ran. The solution was, say, a neurotic paralysis of the legs which so crippled them that they could not walk, much less go forward or run away. The solution of the impasse was illness, but the illness itself was a concession to the social demands. Illness is respectable, cowardice is not. The soldier solved his difficulties in a socially acceptable way, but at the expense of a serious illness, which not only saved him from

being shot, but crippled him so effectually that he was not good for much of anything, at least for a long time.

The behavior of our handicapped classes shows, therefore, a great desire for social esteem. The very illness that marks them as outside the crowd takes on a form which at once admits them as members. The necessity to conform is so great that one finds it lacking only in the severest and most malignant forms of mental disease and perhaps not altogether there. In passing, let me suggest that a tendency which manifests itself with such strength and so universally should be a wonderful source of energy for good. Handled with wisdom, it should be a source of tremendous power.

Society, like Procrustes, demands that all shall come up to a given standard. It, too, makes a standard that few can achieve; we are all a little too long or a little too short for the Procrustean bed. But society is relentless and chops us off or stretches us out to fit, regardless of the injury inflicted. Society demands our last measure of adaptive power, and to the extent that we do not fit, to that extent we may compromise by the subterfuge of illness; we may pretend, but in the last analysis we must pay the price, which in the end is death, the final failure.

Now there are two approaches in helping to better inadequate adjustments. You may try to change the individuals, as already indicated, or you may try to change the circumstances. The former particularly requires a certain attitude of mind in you which is essential to success. It is the attitude of the scientist. It is impersonal in the sense that it is not fraught with sentimentalism, which is dangerous, or with a sympathy that may be blinding. It requires an understanding based on knowledge and an unqualified desire to bring to pass a better state of affairs, untintured by self-seeking motives.

In order that I may convince you of the importance of this state of mind, you must know that the antisocial wishes that find expression in conduct are unconscious to their host. Modern psychology has demonstrated that the larger part of our mental life, that portion from which comes all the motive power for conduct, lies beneath the threshold of what we ordinarily call our conscious selves. This is the region in which all that complex battle of motives occurs which ultimately surges to the surface and finds expression in actions of which we are aware. Therefore, blame is an unscientific and useless attitude with which to approach an attempt to effect any change in the results. Our antipathic emotions are only evidences that we ourselves stand in danger of similar lapses and have to bring all our feelings of

blame and hate and disgust to bear upon them in order to protect ourselves from seeing in them anything that is desirable. Then again this organ of the unconscious is wonderfully sensitive and is aware, by that subtle process we call intuition, of any unfriendly attitude in those about us. You must therefore learn to purge yourselves of feelings of blame, criticism, disgust, or similar emotions in approaching these problems. The difficulties of adjustment with which you will have to deal can not be helped by approaching them as if they were manifestations of original sin, or by talking down to the unfortunate in terms of specious platitudes. You will have to help to find better solutions than they have been able to, and help, too, in a spirit of understanding, with patience and by means of a superior knowledge. To do less than this is to attempt a correction by the use of undisciplined thinking which will fail at that point where, because of your personal limitations, you are unable to separate the wheat from the chaff. Success, therefore, will come to you in the degree to which you are able to weigh coolly, calmly, and dispassionately all the factors and throw the influence of your knowledge, your training, and your example and character in the balance on the side of better things.

Why, you may ask, should I discuss the attitude of mind with which these social problems should be approached? What can that have to do with the nature of those problems and their solution? Just this: You yourselves are parts of society, you are the instrumentalities through which it is sought to effect better adjustments. Now, just as an instrument must be fabricated for the work it is to do, so you must be shaped for the work you are to do. One would not try to repair a watch with a crowbar or to cut butter with a mallet. You, as instruments of society—as tools if you will—must be forged of good metal, be delicate enough in construction to deal with delicate situations, strong enough where strength is necessary, and keen-edged enough to cut deeply into the facts and discover what lies beneath. This course is the process of your fabrication.

Now with reference to the environment. You must, of course, stand in the community as essentially constructive individuals, but you will constantly come across circumstances in which you will feel convinced that the existing machinery that has been evolved for the purpose of dealing with problems of social maladjustment is inadequate and works hardship and injustice. You should not passively accept this machinery as being perfect, but will be forced to a consideration of how it may be improved. Civilization, our civilization, has come by its traditions and institutions by divers and devious

ways. Some of the accepted standards strike very deeply into the nature of man, flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, but others sit very lightly on the surface. If you will study the construction of primitive society, you will realize that the people we call savages are already at a very high point of social development, that their institutions have a long history and that their organization is very complex. One comes from such a study, which indicates how man has been blindly groping through the ages by a sort of hit-and-miss process, a method of trial and error, wondering whether after all our solutions are necessarily all upon the right track, and inclined to more or less sympathy with a recent writer who closes his book with the following: "To that planless hodgepodge, that thing of shreds and patches called civilization, its historian can no longer yield superstitious reverence. He will realize better than others the obstacles to infusing design into the amorphous product; but in thought at least he will not grovel before it in fatalistic acquiescence, but dream of a rational scheme to supplant the chaotic jumble."

Let me give you an example of how existing machinery creaks in its bearings. A colored boy was incorrigible as a youth. He grew up to adolescence and took to alcohol. He began to be arrested for all sorts of crimes and accumulated a varied and lengthy police record. He served time for petty crimes, for assault, and a long term for burglary. He attempted to kill his wife, and tried to consummate bigamy under a threat to shoot the girl if she refused to marry him. He stabbed one man, acquired the drug habit, and habitually toted a gun when he was drunk and was known as a bad man. He had been passed upon by the local psychiatrist as a psychopathic type of some sort. In other words, he had advertised himself as widely and emphatically as he could as headed for more and increasingly serious acts of a criminal nature. He came and went in and out of jail and prison and finally committed a homicide. Then he was hung. How wasteful and how inefficient and stupid the whole procedure seems in retrospect, and yet that is about the way the machinery works on the average. It is such inadequacies that need correcting, and it is through the careful studies and the accumulated experiences of such work as you are fitting yourselves to perform that more practical methods will be evolved for dealing with the social problems that are presented by such types of individuals.

Human nature has been in process of evolution a very long time. The period covered by history represents only a very short part of the time during which the process has been going forward. The differences between people are very much less than their resemblances, and

those differences are in degrees of equipment, which make some a little better able than others to handle their problems. All have at their best something worth while, a percentage, be it ever so small, of efficiency, if only the circumstances are not made too hard. For these problems of society modern psychology, with your help, is to find that adjustment which will most nearly enable people to develop their good points to the uttermost, which will help them to be of the maximum social value within their limitations. Mere repression can solve only part of the problem; beyond that is needed intelligent encouragement and assistance to do better.

And speaking of repression reminds me to say just a word regarding punishment. Punishment is theoretically inflicted as a repressive measure both upon the criminal and by way of example upon those who might become criminals. From this point of view, it is manifestly very largely a failure. It needs to be used after the manner of the conditioned reflex about which the behaviorists write so much. It needs to be scientifically studied, so that it may be used to make the wrong path undesirable, and coupled with an adequate system of training and development, to make the right path more attractive. No one can know the criminal classes without realizing how little they really get out of their way of living that gives satisfaction. But their childish make-up renders that continuity of effort which spells success for most of us impossible for them. They should be assisted to develop this possibility and helped to find activities that are sufficiently interesting to stimulate and maintain it. You should be the clear-minded, disciplined thinkers of the community to whom it will learn to turn for information that will be of service in dealing with all these difficult social problems.

This is the method, you will see, of attempting to make available the energies of the individual to the best advantage. It is quite different from hanging a man because he has stolen two shillings, cutting off his leg because he has a pain in it, or discarding a broken part of a machine and putting nothing in its place. It deals with the human machine and with the social machine as with machines elsewhere—as means of utilizing energy. If a part is not functioning well, we attempt to repair the machine, not destroy it. If the part—the leg, the stomach, the brain, or what not—is out of order, we try to fix it so that it will be as good as new; if this cannot be done, then the next best thing is to try to change the kind of work in such a way that the weakened member will not interfere so much with the results—in a way that will remove the excessive strain from the weak part. If the individual cannot be changed, perhaps the circumstances can.

Let me illustrate more concretely what I mean. The average individual who is seriously defective mentally is to-day practically a total loss to the community. In fact, he is more than just a loss—he is a source of loss in others. He can be rated only as a liability. Now we know, as a matter of fact, that a large number of the feeble-minded can be educated and trained within certain limits, are good-natured, industrious, faithful, and reliable—in other words, that they possess qualities that would make them of considerable use if their energies could be consistently directed within their limitations. In fact we all have our limitations and can function to best advantage only when we keep within them. I am convinced that if this principle could be generally accepted, a large proportion of human material which now has to be rated as a total liability could be made an asset, not only from the point of view of society, but from that of the individual himself.

One of my colleagues has suggested that, if large factory owners could be made to understand this, and would provide a special environment for them, a very considerable number of the feebleminded of a factory community could be usefully employed and so kept at home and saved an institutional existence. I am not unmindful of the possibilities for evil in such a scheme. I only point to the possibilities for good.

I was asked to talk to you on the behavioristic attitude—the general approach and fundamental assumptions of modern psychology. I have said a great many things to you in the hour. Let me close by bringing together the main points I have tried to make, by summing up the fundamental assumptions of modern psychology, which it has to offer you on the eve of your entry upon your chosen field of work.

1. The organism is a complex of action patterns.
2. Man is what he *does*.
- 3. Perception, thinking, and feeling are but actions in process of becoming.
4. Action is really reaction in the process of adaptation.
5. The process of adaptation is the process of development and evolution.
- 6. All action implies tendencies and counter tendencies, and what issues depends on their relative strength at the time.
- 7. Therefore, what a man does he *wishes* to do.
8. The psyche is the head end of the organism and its history is the history of the relations of the organs.
9. The psyche is the final grouping of the action patterns, integrated to serve the organism in its functions as a unity.

10. The motives that lead to asocial and antisocial conduct are relatively undeveloped and infantile.

11. These motives lie in the unconscious.

12. Modern psychology places great emphasis upon the unconscious.

13. Society is an organism.

14. Maladjustment is always a psycho-social problem.

15. Its correction may be approached by trying to change either the individual or the environment or both.

16. Changing the individual requires a knowledge of the internal evidence to elucidate the nature of his personal difficulties.

17. The internal evidence includes the evidence from the unconscious and the evidence from a clinical examination of the bodily organs.

18. Changing the environment is calculated to adjust it to the limits of the individual.

19. The environment includes social institutions that are far from perfect.

20. Repression and elimination are only negative ways of procedure.

21. Punishment needs to be studied scientifically as a means for conditioning conduct.

22. A positive attitude of education and helpfulness is needed in addition.

23. The principle involved is that the individual and society are like machines composed of parts. The attempt should be made to bring the parts into more harmonious mechanistic adjustment to the end of a better utilization of the energy.

24. The problem should be approached in a scientific frame of mind. Sentimentality is and sympathy may be dangerous, antipathic emotions are distorting, understanding and wisdom are essential.

25. You are the trouble men of the social corporation and should be looked to for the clear and disciplined thinking, based on knowledge from your experience, that will be of aid in bringing about better conditions.

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